

“The Bush budget once again helps the most affluent in our country at the expense of middle- and low-income families. He calls for a \$2.3 trillion tax cut during the next ten years, with most of the benefits going to the top one percent of income earners. According to the Tax Policy Center, those with incomes of more than \$1 million will receive an average tax cut of \$162,000 each year. This is a tax cut that is almost four times the median household income of our country. And, with annual deficits topping \$150 billion each year, it is unwise to travel a path which adds \$3.2 trillion to our national debt. Once again, the President bolsters the richest Americans while saddling the burden on the backs of the poor, the sick, the elderly, and the neediest of our children.

“President Bush, in opposition to the majority of the American people, suggests spending tens of billions of dollars on the war in Iraq with no clear or concise plan for victory. We all support providing the funds necessary to protect and support our brave men and women serving in our Armed Forces, but the President continues to leave these dedicated soldiers, sailors, Marines, and airmen vulnerable to the whims of a sectarian civil war. He must do better than simply throwing more money and more troops at the problem.

“The President proposes cutting Medicare and Medicaid by more than \$300 billion during the next ten years. As our citizens grow older, these cuts will prove devastating to the very people who need medical care the most.

“The Bush budget further exacerbates the issue of uninsured children by failing to provide the necessary mandatory funds to continue insuring even the current number of children covered under the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP).

“Funding for childcare for low- and moderate-income families would be frozen, meaning that inflation would rob more than 300,000 children and their families of critical and reliable childcare assistance that allows parents to remain in the work force.

“President Bush proposes to eliminate the Commodity Supplemental Food Program.

This program serves more than 440,000 elderly persons, mostly shut-ins, by providing much needed meals.

“Funding for elementary and secondary education is cut \$2.8 billion below the Fiscal Year 2007 level.

“Funding for programs to fight pollution would be cut by \$1.4 billion.

“Funding for health care research and training - the budget account that includes the National Institutes of Health - would be cut by \$2.8 billion. This could slow progress on important cancer, heart disease, and diabetes research that could benefit all American families.

“The budget for veterans' health care is cut by \$3.5 billion over the next five years. And, for the fifth year in a row, the President proposes to raise the health care costs on 1.3 million veterans by imposing a \$4.9 billion increase on co-payments on prescription drugs and new enrollment fees. He claims there are no tax increases in this budget, but it will be hard to convince our nation's veterans, especially those returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, of this.

“And while the President proposes to increase Pell Grants, he does so by eliminating the Perkins Vocational Education Loan Program, and by charging higher fees to families who rely on college loans. Even his proposed increases are at the expense of others in need.

“Head Start, one of the most successful pre-school learning programs in our nation's history, would be cut by \$100 million below this year's level.

“The list of cuts affecting tens of millions of Americans goes on and on.

“This budget is just the most recent example of the President's philosophy of giving to the rich while doing little to help middle-income Americans and those who find themselves

facing economic hardships. It is these Americans who work hard every day to provide for themselves and their families, who strive to reach their potential, and who only want to be part of and contribute to the American dream.

"It is clear we can do better. It is clear our people deserve better," Pastor concluded.